



For Immediate Release

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[captions below]

Pacific Asia Museum Announces *40 Years of Building the Pacific Asia Museum Collection*, a New Exhibition Featuring Treasures from Asia and the Pacific Islands

June 13, Pasadena, CA – Pacific Asia Museum announces a new exhibition, ***40 Years of Building the Pacific Asia Museum Collection***, on view beginning July 8 through October 9, 2011. This exhibition provides an opportunity for visitors to Pacific Asia Museum to view over 50 of the most important objects in the collection, many of which are not on regular display because of their sensitivity to light. Currently celebrating its 40th Anniversary, the museum organized the exhibition to demonstrate the extraordinary range and quality of its art collection.

Since 1971, Pacific Asia Museum has carefully built its collection through a combination of purchases and strategically targeted donations. David Kamansky, Director from 1977 through 2003, was instrumental in acquiring much of the museum’s collection of over 14,000 works of art and artifacts from Asia and the Pacific Islands. Today, the museum boasts especially significant holdings in East Asian paintings, ceramics and textiles, Himalayan Buddhist art, Pacific Islands sculpture and ethnographic art.

Among the highlights of the exhibition is *Eagle in a Snowstorm (1848)*, a painting by the Japanese master painter and printmaker Katsushika Hokusai. This scroll originally came from the Harari collection, a

major collection of Japanese paintings and drawings that was given to the museum by several donors beginning in 1986. Hokusai drew inspiration from nature but his intent was not to simply create a realistic portrayal of an eagle. Rather, the image is symbolic and conveys qualities such as nobility, strength and singularity. The intensity of the bird's gaze and the strength of its talons reflect its determination to survive despite harsh conditions. Extended to the metaphoric level, the painting is a reflection of a human condition that rings as true for us today as it did in mid-19th century Japan.

Another treasure in the exhibition is *Bodhisattva in Yab-yum Embrace*, a wooden Chinese sculpture in Tibetan style from the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty (1404 – 1425) that depicts the “father-mother embrace”. This embrace symbolizes the union between Compassion and Wisdom, the two most important concepts in Tibetan Buddhism. When Compassion and Wisdom are joined, as represented by the union of a male bodhisattva and his consort, one can achieve enlightenment. Although this masterpiece was created for a Tibetan Buddhist audience in the 15th century, the ideals that it embodies are still understood and valued by many cultures around the world, transcending time.

Canoes were essential for inter-island travel in Papua New Guinea and still remain a vital mode of transportation in the lives of many Pacific Islanders. Canoes were also objects of ritual and ceremonial gift exchange known as *kula*. Because canoes were essential to daily life over thousands of years, they were carved by skilled artists who passed their techniques down from generation to generation. Adorned with symbolic details, the double-lobed early 20th century *Canoe Prow with Pigments* from the Trobriand Islands of New Guinea would have deflected the spray of the waves and protected the occupants of the canoes, both physically and spiritually. *Canoe Prow with Pigments* is one of the highlighted objects representing art from the Pacific Islands that is on view in the exhibition.

The works of art in *40 Years of Building the Pacific Asia Museum Collection* span more than 1200 years and represent a large cross-section of art from across Asia and the Pacific region. The objects and the exhibition were carefully chosen to resonate with each other and with the objects in the museum's new introductory gallery, completed earlier this year and opened to the public in March. The introductory gallery currently contains an exhibition titled *The Art of Pacific Asia*. Topics addressed in the display include the geography of Asia, materials and techniques, religion in art and ceremonies and rituals. The combination of *40 Years of Building the Pacific Asia Museum Collection* and *The Art of Pacific Asia* is intended to deepen the understanding of art from Asia and the Pacific Islands and also delight the eyes of all visitors to Pacific Asia Museum.

Key programming related to *40 Years of Building the Pacific Asia Museum Collection* will feature the following programs:

- **An Afternoon with David Kamansky, Director Emeritus** on Saturday, July 9th: As Pacific Asia Museum's director for twenty-six of its forty years, Director Emeritus David Kamansky will share his insights on the treasures of the museum's collection.
- **Art and Coffee series** on the second Friday of each month from July through October (July 8th, August 12th, September 9th, October 7th): This series of informal Friday afternoon get-togethers will provide visitors a chance to learn more about featured items of the exhibition, decade by decade. The Curatorial staff will introduce and lead discussion of selected items.

- **Collector's Panel Discussion** on Thursday, August 11: Join Curator Bridget Bray and a panel of Asian art collectors for a behind-the-scenes peek at what it has taken to build Pacific Asia Museum's often surprising collection.
- **Lecture – Vision of the Next 40 Years with Charles Mason, Executive Director** on Sunday, September 25: Join Executive Director Charles Mason as he talks about the museum's future.
- **Lecture - How to Build Your Own Collection** on Sunday, October 2nd: Edward Wilkinson, independent appraiser and past Worldwide Head of Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art at Sotheby's, will give guidance to those who would like to be more knowledgeable in their own art purchases.

Pacific Asia Museum is one of only four institutions in the United States dedicated exclusively to the arts and culture of Asia and the Pacific Islands. The museum's mission is to further intercultural understanding through the arts of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Since 1971, Pacific Asia Museum has served a broad audience of students, families, adults, and scholars through its education and outreach programs.

Pacific Asia Museum is located at 46 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California 91101. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm. Admission is \$9 general, \$7 students/seniors, and free for museum members and children under 12. Admission is free every 4th Friday of the month.

For more information visit www.pacificasiamuseum.org or call (626) 449-2742.

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Lohan and Attendant
China, 15th century
Color on silk
Museum Purchase
1989.28.1

Bodhisattva in Yab-yum Embrace
China (in Tibetan style), early 15th century
Carved wood with pigments and gold
Gift from the Nancy King Collection
2001.1.47

Paul Jacoulet (1896?–1960)
Le Genie Sans Nom. Coree
Woodblock print on paper
Japan, 1953
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Child
1983.42.16

Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
Eagle in a Snowstorm
Japan, 1848
Color and gofun on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George A. Brumder with funds for conservation provided by Dr. Cathleen A. Godzik in memory of her father
1986.113.4